

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2017

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Mr. Secretary:

We write to ask to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss the military's role and response in providing assistance and relief to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in their dire time of need after Hurricane Maria destroyed most of the Island.

Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico two weeks after it was hit by Hurricane Irma, causing combined damages that are estimated to reach into the tens of billions of dollars. Puerto Ricans are reeling from power outages, lack of potable water and a shortage of basic resources—a number of Puerto Ricans have died in the storm and many more are in danger. While we are deeply grateful for the generosity of Americans and the fact that food and supplies arrive daily, there are still many areas of Puerto Rico that have been untouched by the relief effort so far. One week after the hurricane came and went there are still large areas of the Island that have yet to have contact with first responders or receive emergency food and water.

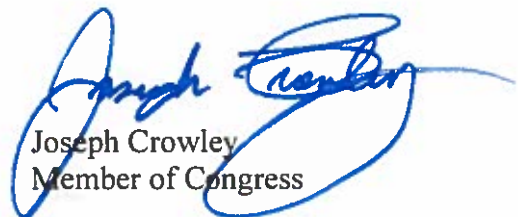
The U.S. military provided life-saving, heroic support to the people of Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 and in 2005 to the people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, deploying a Three-Star General to command operations there. These are but two examples. We believe the U.S. military is best positioned to save lives, meet immediate needs of the people with food and water, set up a functioning telecommunications system and establish medical triage and emergency medical services. Our military servicemen and women are the best in the world and their fellow citizens in Puerto Rico need their help desperately. We would like to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss what the military is currently doing to help Puerto Rico and what more it can and will do in the future.

To set up such a meeting, please have your staff contact Julissa Santoy with Congressman Gutiérrez at 202-225-8303 or Julissa.Santoy@mail.house.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress